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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 002012

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/S
USDOC FOR ROBERT TELCHIN
TREASURY FOR OREN WYCHE-SHAW
PASS USTR FLORIZELLE LISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR MARJORIE COPSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2014

TAGS: [EFIN](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [EINV](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: GOZ CABINET OFFICIAL "TALKS" CLOSER TIES

REF: A. A) HARARE 2003

[1](#)B. B) HARARE 1913

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador Christopher W. Dell under Section 1.5 b/d

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Acting Finance Minister Herbert Murerwa told the Ambassador he believes the U.S. has exaggerated the GOZ's democratic shortcomings and urged us to reengage more with Zimbabwe. The Ambassador responded that the U.S. is aware of recent GOZ overtures, but that reality on the ground must match this new rhetoric. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) During the Ambassador's Dec. 13 introductory courtesy call on the acting Finance Minister, Murerwa suggested the GOZ was making a concerted effort to rebuild ties with the U.S. &We want you to help us strengthen our democracy,8 said Murerwa, a Harvard alumnus. The acting Finance Minister complained that &little things8 were getting in the way of U.S.-Zimbabwe relations, citing the GOZ's Oct. 27 deportation of a Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) delegation. &Any country worth its salt would have thrown them out,8 Murerwa insisted.

[1](#)3. (C) The Ambassador said we were aware of President Mugabe's more restrained tone toward the U.S. but were looking for concrete progress on issues of concern. The Ambassador said a confident, democratic government would not worry about thirteen trade unionists on a fact-finding mission. He cited other recent GOZ actions that undermine democracy and open debate, such as the NGO Bill, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and its decision to appeal the not guilty verdict in the treason trial of opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader Morgan Tsvangirai.

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[1](#)4. (C) Murerwa defended each of these policies, but said he would have applied them more narrowly. &We are not a normal country. We are a country under siege,8 he said. In justifying the NGO bill, Murerwa maintained &the evidence was there8 that &the NGOs were being used for political purposes8 (Ref a).

[1](#)5. (C) Biographic Note: Murerwa studied for a BA, MA and PhD at Harvard from 1972-79 through a Ford Foundation grant. He returned to Zimbabwe at independence in 1979 and immediately became one of the first four black permanent secretaries. From 1984-90, he was Zimbabwe's Ambassador to the UK and Ireland. Murerwa is now on his third stint as Finance Minister (acting this time), although he readily acknowledges that education rather than economics is his forte. He has a son at the University of Pennsylvania.

[1](#)6. (C) Comment: Murerwa's remarks provide additional confirmation that the GOZ is softening its rhetoric toward the U.S. in the hope it can lessen its isolation. While making it clear in discussions with senior GOZ officials that we would welcome an improved relationship, we have also underscored that our views are based on principle, that the GOZ's rhetoric must be matched by concrete actions and the first move has to come from Harare.

DELL